

## **A B S T R A C T**

A process for the production of a pipeline-transportable crude oil from a bitumen feed, the process comprising:

- (1) dividing the bitumen feed into two fractions, the first fraction comprising between 20 and 80 wt% of the feed, the second fraction comprising between 80 and 20 wt% of the total feed, (the two fraction together forming 100 wt % of the feed),
- (2) distillation of the first fraction obtained in step (1) (preferably under vacuum) into a light fraction boiling below 380 °C (preferably the 450 °C fraction, more preferably the 510 °C fraction) and a residual fraction;
- (3) thermal cracking (of at least part of, preferably all of,) the residual fraction obtained in the distillation process described in step (2);
- (4) distillation of the product obtained in step (3) into one or more light fractions (boiling below 350 °C), optionally one or more intermediate fractions (boiling between 350 and 510 °C) and a heavy fraction (boiling above at least 350 °C);
- (5) combining the second fraction obtained in step (1), the light fraction obtained in step (2) and the light fraction(s) obtained in step (4) to obtain a pipeline-transportable crude oil; and
- (6) using heavy fraction obtained in step (4) for the generation of power and/or heat.